



From Oranjestad simply head south out following the main road **1A (southbound)/1B (northbound)**. The first major sight on the right hand side is going to be **Queen Reina Beatrix International Airport**. Not worth a stop I know, but at least you will know you are heading in the right direction. Continue along this roadway heading south past the **Balashi Brewery** and **Desalination Plant (WEB)** in the distance.

Once you get to the southern end of the island you will see the oil refinery, you can wind your way down from the highway

through downtown **San Nicolas** to **Rogers Beach** and **Baby Beach**. Baby beach is a popular destination for locals and visitors alike for swimming and snorkeling. Imo, Rodgers Beach, although closest to the refinery, is more picturesque. Just try to look south and not north to keep the Refinery out of eye sight. There is a bit of shade here, but no facilities, if you wanted to stop and take a swim. There are pay as go facilities at Baby Beach as well as a food truck and chaise and umbrellas rental.

I understand there is only so much time, so for a short version of this tour, skip Arikok National Park, by turning around at Baby Beach and retrace your route northward back towards Oranjestad.

To see Arikok National Park, from Baby Beach, continue the tour north towards Arikok. Make your way north towards the dirt path which will take you on a circuit around the southeastern coast of Aruba. You will see the **Sailor's Memorial**, huge red anchor, large enough it is hard to miss. This is the windward side of the island and swimming on this side is extremely treacherous and discouraged due to the winds and currents. People have drowned and died at **opening mouth to the ocean at Baby Beach**, as well as Boca Grandi, Bachelors Beach, Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Heading northward, on the west side of the path, the large flat building with guard towers, surrounded by barbed wire, is **the prison, KIA**, nice oceanview if your cell has windows. The first small beach along this route is **Bachelors Beach** and the second expansive one is **Boca Grandi**.

Anywhere between this area and Boca Prins, there are regular sightings of wild donkeys as well as goats. Past here, off of the path, to the right, you will see paths towards the ocean. Depending on the type of vehicle you are in, and depending upon the rocks/coral, driving cautiously you can drive close to the coast for some great photos of the crashing waves (protect your camera from the spray) and in some spots, small beaches.

In the distance you will see the wind farm at Vader Piet. Continuing on this route you will encounter the gate for entry, for a fee, to **Arikok National Park**. Continuing along the

coastline you will see a sign on the left for **Guadirikiri Cave**. The cave is open to the public with tours given by the National Park Service free of charge. We customarily tip the guide a few dollars for the tours. Be forewarned the cave tour is pretty extensive and you will be warned before entry that if you are afraid of bats, or have respiratory problems, you should not take the tour. The cave is VERY hot and EXTREMELY humid. I was glad I have seen it once and now do not have to go back.

Once you have entered the confines of the park, after passing the wind farm, you will continue on to **Boca Prins**. There is a **small bar and restaurant** here which is a good place for a pit stop and cold beverage. A quick left after the restaurant/bar and a short ride down the path will bring you to **Fontein Cave**. This cave is easier than Guadirikiri but does have bats as well.

Continue past the parking area to the west and there is a turn off to the right for the **White Sand Dunes**. To get to the next stop on this tour, from Boca Prins you need to follow the path inland a bit to **get around the sand dunes** and being part of the park, are protected. Continue following the path and once past the dunes, the path will wind back towards the east and the coast. This next sight is **Dos Playa**. If anything it is a great photo opportunity and one of my favorite natural treasures on the island. In order to get to the second beach one would need to hike across that portion of the park. I have never done it myself, but have always suggested this is the ultimate spot for a romance, a picnic and sunbathing au naturelle. Just remember to glob on the sunscreen! And no swimming, the water is too treacherous.

There is parking at both Boca Prins and Dos Playa. If you do not wish to walk over to the second beach at Dos Playa, **walk out to the point** over the rocks towards the ocean of the first beach and you will get a glimpse of the **second beach** of Dos Playa.

Looking closely on the way out of the park, there will be some good photo opportunities. On the right hand side of the road, we have always seen wild goats, roadside and on the hills, as well as a VERY picturesque Fofoti tree.

In order to get back to Oranjestad you can retrace your path from which you came, or **head west following the path away from Dos Playa** back through the interior of the park. You will ride quite a way to arrive back to **civilization**. Once out of the park, stay on **road 7A/7B** follow the signs for Santa Cruz and Oranjestad, heading westward towards **Oranjestad** and the resort areas beyond.